

NAME: _____

DUE DATE: _____

Reading Guide for:
“The AMERICAN SCHOLAR” by Ralph Waldo Emerson

CQ#1: In what ways did American society experience a spiritual reawakening, both religious and secular, in the 1st half of the 19th century?

Instructions: Closely read “The American Scholar” by Ralph Waldo Emerson. Highlight the text as appropriate. Make marginal notations next to passages that are relevant to the prompts on the following page. Provide thoughtful written responses to those prompts.

Glossary:

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Proponent —supporter; promoter | <input type="checkbox"/> Sufferance —patient endurance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Keynote —key idea | <input type="checkbox"/> Cowed —frightened into submission |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Defer —give in to | <input type="checkbox"/> Courtly muses —ideas of the royal courts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Parliaments —meetings | <input type="checkbox"/> Avarice —greed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Poesy —poetry | <input type="checkbox"/> Indolent —lazy |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Troubadours —entertainers of medieval times who often sang of love and beauty | <input type="checkbox"/> Complaisant —complying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Love of letters —love of writing and the expression of ideas | <input type="checkbox"/> Decorous —respectful; in line with tradition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sluggard —slow; lazy | <input type="checkbox"/> Drudges —people who menial, meaningless, monotonous work |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sere —dried up and withered | <input type="checkbox"/> Indomitably —determinedly; committedly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Zenith —high point | <input type="checkbox"/> Prevalent —dominant |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Pole-star —point of reference; used to navigate | <input type="checkbox"/> Chief disgrace —worst thing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vexed —difficult; troubled | <input type="checkbox"/> Opinion predicted geographically —beliefs based on where you come from |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Sensual indulgence —satisfying physical desires |

(1) What is the source? (Who is Ralph Waldo Emerson? What kind of source is it? Who is the audience?)

(2) According to the transcendentalists, what was the “prime” (most important) source of authority?

(3) According to the editor (the introduction), how does Emerson define freedom?

- (4) What is the “postponed expectation of the world” that Emerson refers to in paragraph 1?
- (5) According to Emerson, what is the source of all fear? Why is the scholar necessarily brave?
- (6) In paragraph 3, Emerson chastises Americans by saying they are “trustless.” What is it that Emerson thinks Americans should trust?
- (7) What is the “tragic consequence” of Americans’ tendency to respect and follow the ideas of Europe? (¶4)
- (8) What is the “remedy” to this “tragic consequence?” (¶4)
- (9) What is the “chief disgrace in the world” (worst thing in the world)?